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CHRISTIANITY AND MODERN CULTURE

Dr. Shaw recognizes that a crisis in the history of Christianity has been reached. It is his aim to meet this crisis by considering the essence of Christianity on the one hand and by fathoming the spirit of the age on the other.¹ Is there a modern Christianity which is germane at once to our thinking life and living thought? That is our author's question. It is required that he should know what our age, with its culture and civilization, with its ideals and duties, really is; also that he should know what Christianity is. In both of these directions, his survey and insight are of commendable order, much as his conception of the bearing of historical criticism and consequent historical doubt does not seem to me to be quite adequate. The question of Schleiermacher and Strauss: Are we still Christians? is happily turned into the question: Are we Christians yet? Modern life, he says, has not outlived Christianity by surmounting its ideals, or by exhausting their possibilities. "Outside Christianity nothing higher will arise; but within it newer forms will spring forth." Thus is his conclusion a judgment of faith understandable by the man who shares the faith; not a judgment of science which would need to be proved by arguments which compel the assent of the intellect—a need which, in the nature of the case, science is not competent to satisfy.

Dr. Titius has prepared an exhaustive review and criticism in a scientific but conservative spirit of the spiritual development of the gifted and *verewigte* pastor Kalthoff of Bremen.² Attention is first given to radicalism as idealism, both ethical and religious. Much appreciation is accorded Kalthoff's attitude toward the problem of autonomous personality and religious dependence upon God, in the first stages of his rather pathetic, if not tragic, development. For when Kalthoff passes on to think of God as infinite life, eternal mystery, and cosmic reality, he lands, with Haeckel, in a position which Titius evaluates as sub-Christian. Monism as pantheistic optimistic *Diesseitsreligion* is not Christian, Titius avers. True, but the thought of God is fast becoming once more the most serious question of the modern man, and Kalthoff has made a contribution to the subject.

¹ *Christianity and Modern Culture*. An Essay in Philosophy of Religion. By Charles Gray Shaw, B.D., Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy and Butler Lecturer on Comparative Religion, New York University. Cincinnati: Jennings & Graham, 1908. 310 pages. \$1.25.

² *Der Bremer Radicalismus*. Vortrag in der Versammlung der Freunde der christlichen Welt zu Marburg am 10. Oktober, 1907 gehalten. Von D. Arthur Titius, Professor in Göttingen. Tübingen, 1908. 132 pages. M. 2.

Next, Titius delineates radicalism and the history of primitive Christianity. The contention of Kalthoff that the Jesus of history is a Christological, sociological, *proletariat* construction does not merit the consideration which a scientific refutation would involve, Titius thinks. Yet Titius closes his criticisms with some observations, not a little astonishing, coming from such a source. No triumph is possible, he thinks, for either the party of a history-less world of ideas or that of an idea-less history. I simply point to this in passing. Of more interest is the fact that, while opposing supernaturalism in the natural world, Titius urges with utmost seriousness that the surrender of ethico-religious supernaturalism is tantamount to the sacrifice of our holiest experiences and feelings. Yet he adds:

I blame no one if he is not able to share this judgment concerning the religious uniqueness of Jesus, but sees therein merely a survival of the old miracle faith. I am not at all surprised that this in fact *enthusiastic* [italics mine] judgment is not every man's affair. On the contrary, often as I think about this matter, as often I indeed do, I am filled with astonishment that there are still thoughtful and critically endowed men who have the *courage* [italics mine] to hold fast to this enthusiasm . . . and that I find myself under the necessity of showing the same faith.

Here is a point for those who are betrayed into the attempt to found religion on historical criticism. Trusting to the judgment of historical science and not to the judgment of religious enthusiasm, Jesus loses his place in the religion of the Christian. He is sacrificed to skepticism, as Kalthoff says, according to Titius. In this conclusion Titius is without doubt right. Only recently such men as Johannes Müller and Rode have made the same admission. Men who have thought long and deeply upon this subject now see that it is at once irreligious and disastrous to found our faith upon the conclusions of historical science concerning Jesus. To that science the non-existence of the Jesus of history is now—and probably henceforth—admittedly a possibility. It is a question of finding God in the biblical portrait—historical or not—of the Christ, and if God was once there he is there still: not there alone, but there, there as nowhere else in the world. This judgment of faith incommensurable with, and wholly independent of, the judgment of criticism—relying on which we are irremediably doomed to skepticism, not to religion—this eternal foundation even Bremen radicalism cannot shake, or shaking, must itself go to pieces upon the shoals and breakers of the modern world, must perish from its own uncertainty and poverty.

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